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TEXTUAL CRITICISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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II. THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION.

The evidence of corruption so far considered gives very little help in the endeavor to remove corruption. Conjectural emendation is so uncertain, and is so purely subjective that it ought to be only a last resort. External evidence will be the main dependence of the critic. In regard to external evidence, however, we must notice that it should come through different lines of transmission in order to have the highest value. A thousand copies of the Hebrew Bible, if made to-day, will only enable us to restore their immediate progenitor. The fact, therefore, that the Hebrew MSS. are all of a single type, makes them of no value at all beyond the point at which they originated. For the restoration of the earlier text we must look to other sources. The most prominent among these is the Alexandrian translation commonly known as the Septuagint (or the LXX).

The importance of the LXX arises from the fact that it is older than the Massoretic recension—or at least, (lest we seem to prejudge the case) it is earlier than the point to which we can clearly trace the Massoretic method. To judge from the prologue to Ecclesiasticus, the translation was substantially completed before 131 B. C. It is then older by three centuries than any other source of knowledge concerning the Old Testament text. The first thing we discover about it is that it is different in many passages from the Hebrew. It therefore confirms what we have already suspected from indications in the Massora itself—that the text was corrupt before the Massoretic system was put in force.

As this is doubted by some—as there is reluctance to admit that the LXX translators could have had a different text from ours—it may be well to look at the sort of testimony given by a version. A version of course cannot restore the exact wording of its original.* Such cases as that cited in the foot-note are not uncommon, but a far larger number are of a different kind. The question we really have before us in the use of a version is—could the translation be got from the text before us or not? If not, then we have a various reading

* If the Greek has *kai elpe* for example, it would not determine whether the Hebrew had וידבר or ויאמר.

that ought to be considered. But it has been charged by some that the variations of the Greek are due to the caprice or ignorance of the translators. Whether this is so must be determined by examination of the evidence. The only caprice of which a professed translator is guilty must be freedom of rendering or intentional fabrication. We cannot suppose the authors of the LXX to have been guilty of the latter because their work enjoyed for so long a high reputation among the Jews even in Palestine. But they did not use the license of a translator even so far as they might. Their translation adhered too closely to the Hebrew idiom to be even tolerable Greek, and as any one can prove by experiment, this closeness of rendering generally enables us to decide without difficulty the Hebrew original. In a large part of the Bible we can translate the Greek back into Hebrew with scarcely a change in the order of words* Now if we find this scrupulous adherence to the Hebrew in places which verify our text it is simply begging the question to assert that variation elsewhere is due to caprice. The question of ignorance is still to be examined, and the answer will not be to the disadvantage of the translators. In obscure passages with an unvocalized text and without the help of grammatical study we expect them to stumble. But even here we are able to trace their error in such a way as to show what text they had before them. If we had the original LXX before us we could restore the Hebrew text from which it was made with comparative certainty. Even then we should have only begun the work of criticism, for after we are in possession of two varying copies of the same work, the whole question of the relative worth of each must be carefully studied before we can use them to reconstruct their common original.

But we have not even made a beginning of this beginning. The Greek original LXX became the source of a new stream of copies, all the more copious that this became the standard version of the whole Greek church. And here we are able (in striking contrast with the Hebrew) to trace the history of the text from external sources. The version, in the hands of copyists, became rapidly corrupted. In the third century of our era this corruption was openly acknowledged and means were taken to check it. This endeavor was made by different men, and their method was the natural one which we have already discovered in the case of the New Testament. From the copies in circulation a standard eclectic recension was made which should be

* An example may be taken at random,—say Gen. xxiv., 1: *Kaì 'Aβραὰμ ἦν πρεσβύτερος προβέβηκώς ἡμερῶν καὶ κύριος ἠελλόγησε τὸν 'Aβραὰμ κατὰ πάντα.* The Hebrew is *ואברהם זקן והיה בך את-אברהם בכל* *בא, בים'ים ויהיה בך את-אברהם בכל*, and the correspondence is exact.

the model for the future. Three such recensions were made as we have good reason to believe, not far apart in point of time. One of these was by Lucian who performed a similar office for the New Testament. Another was by Hesychius, of which we know little. The third was the celebrated Hexapla of Origen. These differing recensions, while useful for the times in which they were made, only brought increased confusion in the long run. The LXX has thus become itself an intricate problem for textual criticism.

For this new problem we have considerable material at hand. Lagarde enumerates some thirty (fragmentary) uncials, and the number of cursives is, of course, much larger. Among the cursives this author* has separated a single group which he supposes to represent the text of Lucian. He has, at any rate, restored for us the uncial MS. from which this group is derived† A few examples of the way in which even the oldest MSS. differ may not be out of place. These oldest MSS. are, of course, the Alexandrinus (A) the Vaticanus (B) and the Sinaiticus (S) along side of which I will put Lagarde's restored uncial, calling it L.

I Sam. I., 3. All the Greek copies before us agree in reading "and there were Eli and his two sons," while the Massoretic Text (MT) has "and there were the two sons of Eli." The Greek seems the more natural.

I Sam. I., 6. [*"And her rival provoked her even with provocation in order to set her at naught"*] for the Lord had not given her a son according to her affliction and according to the distress of her soul, and she was grieved [on account of this and wept] *because the Lord had shut her womb* in not giving her a son."

This is all contained in L. AB omit the words in brackets. MT has only the words in italics. The verse seems not to have been understood by the original translators, whose work was supplemented by the insertion of the first clause. We may see rhetorical expansion perhaps in the phrase "according to her affliction and according to the distress of her soul." I suspect, however, that there was some basis for it in the shape of a *K^etsarathah* (=like her rival?) which was misunderstood.

I Sam. I., 9. LA agree with MT in inserting "after drinking," which is not in B. The rule for such cases is that the insertion is more likely to have taken place than the omission and the shorter text is right. All the Greek copies have "and stood before Jehovah"

* Lagarde, *Librorum Veteris Testamenti Canonicorum pars prior Græce*, Gottingae, 1883.

† I may perhaps be allowed to refer to my own notices of Lagarde's LXX. in the OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT for September, and in the *Presbyterian Review* for April, 1884.

not in MT which would fall under the same rule, unless we suppose a motive (religious scruple) sufficient for the omission.

1 Sam. I., 11. LA with MT have "and do not forsake thy servant" not found in B. The rule just given favors the shorter text. The clause not being in the original LXX it was inserted in A and B from the Hebrew. In this same verse the Greek has "until the day of his death" instead of "all the days of his life" of MT. It is impossible to decide between the two—which is practically of little moment. In the last part of the verse the Greek (or its original) has inserted "and wine and strong drink he shall not drink"—a case where similar passages which speak of the Nazarite's vow influenced the scribe.

1 Sam. I., 13. L inserts "but the Lord heard her" after "but her voice was not heard"—rhetorical expansion.

1 Sam. I., 14. Greek has "the *servant* of Eli" instead of Eli—an insertion designed to save the reputation of the venerable priest from the charge of harshness. In the same verse B has "put away thy wine," LA have "put away the wine from thee." and MT has "put away thy wine from thee." The first has probability in its favor. All Greek copies have "and depart from the presence of the Lord," omitted in MT (from religious scruple?)

1 Sam. I., 19, 20. L has *orthrisantes de* where the others have *kai orthrizousi*—a case of change of wording to make better Greek. LB insert Elkana in one place, MT has it in another, and A in both. The Hebrew so often leaves the subject to be understood that we are tempted to think it was originally found in neither place. The same is true of the *wattahar* which is almost certainly wrong as it stands in MT with A, but which LB put at the end of verse 19 or beginning of verse 20.

1 Sam. I., 22. L has "And Hannah did not go up *with him*, for she said to her husband [*I will not go up*] *till the boy go up* [*with me*] when I have weaned him, and he shall appear before the Lord and shall dwell there forever." The words in brackets are omitted by AB, those in italics are omitted by MT, which reads "until the boy be weaned and I bring him." If MT be original the insertions were of course made to clear up the obscurities. Even then it is difficult to account for the omission of *and I bring him*.*

1 Chron. X., 1. "And Philistines fought against Israel and *the men of Israel* fled before the Philistines." L and MT agree in this reading. ABS omit the words in italics (probably rightly).

* I have relied upon Tischendorf with Nestle's collation of the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS. The latter, by the way, is defective in 1 Sam.

1 Chron. x., 2. "And Philistines pursued after Saul and after his sons"—so SL with MT. The others omit *and after his sons*.

1 Chron. x., 3. All the Greek MSS. insert *ponois*, not found in MT. Possibly the word *baggesheth* [with the bow] was read *bagga-shoth*.

1 Chron. x., 5. LA with MT add "and he died" at the end of the verse. Duplication is especially easy here, for the next verse begins with the same word in the Hebrew.

1 Chron. x., 7. AB have "and all Israel in the valley saw that Israel fled." L has "and all the men in the valley saw that Israel fled." MT = "and *all the men of Israel* in the valley saw that *they* fled." I suspect L to be the original.

1 Chron. x., 11. ABS "all the inhabitants of Gilead." MT "all Jabesh Gilead." L "all the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead." The original translators evidently mistook *yabhesh* for *yashabh*.

These variations which are only a part of those which occur in two chapters are sufficient to show the nature of the problem before us. They illustrate also the method of solving the problem. In each case we inquire what is the transcriptional probability, *i. e.* which of the readings is most likely to have given rise to the others? To answer this we have to consider two things—which would be most likely to be altered either (first) in order to make better Greek, or (secondly) to bring the Greek into greater conformity to the Hebrew (as we now have it). We discover that both classes of alterations are found. Having picked out the Greek reading which was earlier than the others, we again compare it with the Hebrew to see if it gives us a more probable text. I think careful consideration of the examples given will enable us to say :

(a) Of the Greek texts that of the Vatican MS. is nearest the original LXX because furthest from the MT.*

(b) L and A both show considerable alteration in the direction of the MT. L, however, oftener combines the new reading with the old, and it has oftener changed the Greek wording for the sake of elegance.

(c) While in the majority of cases our present Hebrew text approves itself as compared with that before the authors of the LXX, yet in a considerable minority the latter seems to bear the marks of originality.†

* It is much to be desired that we should have this text in some available form. The *Editio Romana* departs from it considerably, and the great work of Vercellone and Cossa is said not to be accurate—aside from its great expense.

† These conclusions are only stated tentatively, as based on a narrow induction. It must be

THE OTHER SOURCES.

No one of these is as important as the Septuagint, and the most of them have been studied very little as aids in textual criticism. They may be conveniently grouped under three heads.

1. *Jewish Sources.* The *Talmud* is the principal one among these, and it has sometimes been supposed to give various readings as in its citation of a verse it will often change one or more words saying "read not thus, but thus." On a closer inspection, however, these cases are seen to contribute nothing to the text. They are simply examples of the fanciful or strained exegesis of the Rabbis in their endeavor to base every doctrine or precept on some Scripture word. The *Midrash* is in the same strain, except that its aim is homiletical rather than legal. The *Targums* finally, while they show the results of Jewish exegesis, do not give any material for criticism. Targum, Midrash and Talmud are based on the Massoretic text, and testify to its existence as far back as they can be traced. This may be partly because in the general Massoretic tendency of Jewish study these productions were studiously conformed to the Hebrew as we know it.

2. *Ancient Versions.* Aside from the LXX the oldest of these is believed to be the Peshito, made directly from the Hebrew text. The Hexaplar Syriac is useful in restoring the text of Origen. The Old Latin made from the LXX was succeeded by the Vulgate of Jerome made from the Hebrew. The Peshito and the Vulgate, if we had them in their original form, would help us to the Hebrew text from which they were made. Unfortunately the Vulgate has been much corrupted by the influence of the Old Latin. The Peshito has very likely been revised into greater conformity with the *textus receptus* of the Old Testament as well as of the New. We possess a really critical edition of neither. The Hexaplar Syriac, the Old Latin, the Coptic with other secondary translations are to be used in the restoration of the LXX.

remembered, further, that the character of the Greek version differs very much in different books.

Lucian's text of the New Testament is said by Westcott and Hort to have been conflate, *i. e.* made up largely by combining two different readings in one, smoothing the language as might best be done. If what has been said above of Lagarde's text be true, it presents very similar phenomena—which confirms his conjecture that he has restored Lucian's recension.

The remains of Origen's Hexapla may be made to confirm the conclusions stated above. As is known, Origen distinguished by *asterisks* the portions which he inserted from the Hebrew, and by *obelisks* the phrases which were in the current Greek, but not in his Hebrew text. Such slight observation as I have been able to make shows that B is comparatively free from the corrections both of insertion and omission; A has nearly all the insertions, but retains a good proportion of what ought (according to O.) to be omitted; L retains all of the omissions, but has a large share of the insertions as well.

3. *Quotations.* Quotations by the Fathers play an important part in the criticism of the New Testament. Their use in regard to the Old Testament is limited, because scarcely any ecclesiastical writer of early times was acquainted with Hebrew. The two notable exceptions are Origen and Jerome, and from these we may doubtless yet learn much concerning the Hebrew text of their day. Two Jewish writers whose works have come down to us come within the same category—Philo and Josephus. Considerable difficulties are found, however, in making use of their works—difficulties that need not be dwelt upon here.

The object of this discussion is to give an idea of the kind and amount of work that still needs to be done before we can be sure of a thoroughly critical text of the Old Testament. This work would seem for the present to be of the first importance. Criticism of the New Testament text has made remarkable progress during this century. Let us hope that the Old Testament science is not to lag far behind.